

REMARKS

Claims 22-42 were examined, with claims 22, 23, and 26-42 rejected and claims 24 and 25 indicated as containing allowable subject matter.

Preliminarily, the disclosure has been objected to because of informalities. In particular, the Examiner asserts that on page 17, lines 1-2, of the substitute specification, “323 should be replaced with “313”, and “321” should be replaced with “311” to be consistent with Fig. 3B. It appears that instead of page 17, line 1-2, the Examiner meant to state page 16, lines 21-22. Otherwise, Applicant has amended the specification accordingly.

Turning to the prior art rejections, claims 22, 23, 26-29, and 31-41 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(e)¹ as being anticipated by Awano (2002/0163079), and claim 30 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Awano. However, as stated above, the Examiner has indicated the presence of allowable subject matter in claims 24 and 25.

While not conceding the validity of the rejection, but merely to advance prosecution, Applicant has placed the application in condition for allowance by (1) amending independent claim 22 to include the features of claims 23 and 24, which has been indicated as containing allowable subject matter, (2) correspondingly canceling claims 23 and 24, (3) amending claims 25 and 26 to depend on claim 22 rather than canceled claims 24 and 23, respectively, and (4) amending independent claim 32 to also include the features of claims 23 and 24.

¹ Since Awano issued on November 7, 2002, and the present application was filed more than one year later on November 12, 2003, the Examiner's rejection should have been under 102(b) rather than 102(e).

In view of the above, Applicant believes the application to be in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is therefore respectfully requested.

Dated: October 31, 2005

Respectfully submitted,

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